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Attractive Filler for Lunch Boxes

By BLANCHE INGERSOLL, Instructor of Home Economics

"GRAB your lunchbox, sis, the bus is coming," calls Harry as he races out to the road. Sis follows, and the busload of chattering youngsters is off over the hill to the fine, big consolidated school.

How different from the good old days when mother and dad trudged down the road many a cold, weary mile, with tin lunchbox in hand, bound for the little wooden schoolhouse where a lone teacher guided the destiny of a mere handful of children.

How different, and yet, in one respect, almost identically the same. The content of the lunchbox has changed very little through all the years. Although the tin pail has given way to the shiny-black lunchkit, the chances are that it contains the same ham or jelly sandwiches, a hard-boiled egg (with a bit of salt in a paper), a big sugar cookie, and an apple.

Lunches are a bother. They must be packed during mother's early morning rush hour, and the menu is not often as it should be. However, if every mother realizes that the noon lunch is a most important factor in the health and normal development of her children, then the preparation of that lunch will take on a new interest and will cease to be a bother.

The ideal diet for growing children should contain plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and eggs, only a small amount of meat, and simple sweets. It is comparatively easy to arrange a good combination of these foods at home and to have variety from day to day, but it is quite another matter to put such foods into a lunchbox so that they will be attractive and appetizing four or five hours later. The particular fault of most lunches, even attractive ones, is that they are monotonous, and monotony is deadly. One friend of mine is very fond of peanuts, but she simply detests peanut butter, because it was given her in sandwich form almost every day for a year.

George Fitch has called the ham sandwich "the great American lunch," and if one could look into the lunchbox of Iowa school children, he would know that Fitch did not exaggerate.

The sandwich we have always with us, but it need not always be ham, nor meat of any kind. In fact, for the younger children, it would be much better to make meat the exception rather than the rule. Whenever possible, use vegetables in the sandwich to supply the minerals and vitamins so necessary to the growing child.

Chopped celery or cabbage or fresh greens may be used either alone or mixed with cheese or nuts, but always moistened and seasoned with salad dressing. A slice of very crisp bacon may be used with the vegetables for variety and added flavor. Firm tomatoes, sliced, are also good in sandwiches.

Tomato butter or preserves and carrot marmalade are two vegetable sweets which are particularly attractive in sandwiches. One fault of all preserves and jellies is that they soak into the bread too much to be agreeable. Crisp sandwiches are mighty good eating, but deliver us from the wet, soaky ones. If cottage cheese is mixed with jelly or jam, it will make a firm paste which will not be absorbed into the bread. The cheese adds one of the best forms of protein and does not change the flavor of the sweet in any way.

New egg sandwiches can be invented frequently by the use of different flavors with the egg. Hard-cooked eggs, chopped and mixed with minced ham or dried beef, have long been favorites. Chopped sweet peppers, shreds of crisp bacon, chopped celery or celery salt, are other flavors often used with egg. For a change, the eggs may be scrambled and either mixed with other foods, or used alone. If one cares for jelly omelet, why not make a jelly-egg sandwich by spreading jelly on the bread before the scrambled egg is added. All egg sandwiches must be carefully seasoned, and, again, must not be soaky.

If possible, change the kind of bread almost as often as the filling. The two old standbys are, of course, graham bread and white bread. Nut bread may be used occasionally in place of the cup cake or cookie, but it is not such a good substitute for the hearty sandwiches. Raisin or currant bread is always a favorite, while steamed brown bread or rye bread are other possible substitutes. Coarse breads, such as graham and whole wheat, are particularly valuable, and should be used more often than white bread.

Variety may also be secured by a change in form as well as in flavor. If one has been eating the full-sized, hearty sandwich for days, a few thin, dainty ones, cut in triangles or narrow strips, will be an agreeable change. These thin sandwiches are good without filling, or, perhaps, with just salad dressing. In this case, the "filler" may be served as a salad or preserves or a stewed fruit, packed in a little screw-topped jar.



The 12 o'clock "wash-up" preparatory to a hot lunch served at a country school.

With the discovery that such an alarming proportion of our school children are undernourished, the hot-lunch idea has spread until, at least one hot dish is prepared and served in almost every up-to-date school. Cocoa and milk soups are popular and often served, but if milk is not served at school in any form, it should be a part of the lunch carried from home. In warm weather this would be carried in a thermos bottle, which may also be used for hot foods at other times. In most cases a thermos bottle is not a luxury, but a necessity, for children must have wholesome food in good condition. It hardly seems necessary to repeat again that milk is one of the most important foods, and should be used in some form daily.

Fruit is very plentiful in Iowa, especially so this year, so there should be some form of fruit in the lunchbox every day. Bake the apples occasionally, either plain or stuffed with raisins, or make an apple salad for the little screw-topped jar. A few plump prunes stuffed with cottage cheese, nuts or marshmallows, or a few figs wrapped in oil paper may be used when fruit is scarce.

Dried fruit conserve made of apricot



Not so different from the good old days as one might suspect. The seats, the games, yes, even the lunch boxes have changed very little through all the years.

and pineapple or prune and orange mixtures the delicious either for sandwiches or for the little jar. Oranges are worth their weight in gold and should be used as often as possible.

Heavy, rich foods, such as fat meat, pastry and rich cakes have no place in the child's lunch. The fruit may serve as a dessert or simple puddings and cakes

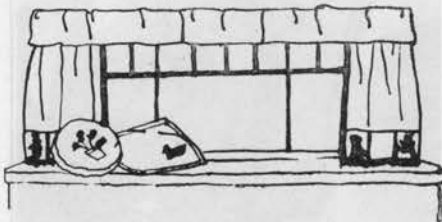
may be used. Cornstarch or tapioca puddings may be colored with pink coloring or with chocolate, and may be varied with the use of pineapple, coconut, canned berries or other fruits. A few pieces of homemade candy are considered a treat. Fudge, penuche, peanut brittle, or puffed riceballs will keep without getting sticky if each piece is wrapped sep-

arately. It is usually a good plan not to let the children know just what is going into the lunchbox, especially if candy is a part of it. Any element of surprise adds much to the enjoyment of the lunch.

Whatever the bulk of the lunch may be, if there is plenty of fruit and milk provided, the health of the children is sure to be preserved.

The Throne Room of Childhood

By HARRIET SCHLEITER



Mother Goose characters on muslin squares add charm to the child's room.

WHETHER it is for the brand new little ruler of your home, or for the royal personages who have held sway for a handful of years, it is a very important room, and one to be planned with the uttermost care—the nursery.

Let us consider first the room the child needs from the time he is an hour to a year old. I know of a woman who planned the nursery for her first baby, forgetting none of the essentials except that she chose a room an inconvenient distance from the bathroom, kitchen and porch. When baby must be bathed there was the tub to carry to his room; when he must be fed in the night, someone had to go to the kitchen to heat his milk; and when he must have his nap in the out-of-doors, his mother had to bundle him downstairs and out onto the porch, crib and all. Now, this may seem like very little to do after all, but the truthful pedometer registered two extra miles a day. So this wise woman put her head in her hands and thought and thought of how she could lessen the distance covered and the energy used.

It happened that in her house there was a downstairs bedroom adjoining a tiny bathroom which opened off the kitchen. And so, presto, the little bedroom became the nursery, and greatly improved it was from the upstairs one.

There was in it a bureau, which held nothing but the baby's own clothes, sheets for his crib, diapers, towels, and other small essentials. So, when it was time to dress or bathe him, there was no grand scrambling all over the house to collect the necessary things. Near the bureau was a little built-in closet in which was kept soap, boric acid, vaseline, medicated cotton, and talcum. When it came time for baby's bath all there was to do was to fill the little white tub, testing the water with the thermometer which hung in the bathroom and put the tub on the table by the bureau. There were all the necessities within reach and never an unnecessary step to take.

In the kitchen this mother put a tiny little white-topped table, on which she kept the baby's empty bottles and dishes

used for making his food, so they didn't have to be moved about out of the way of the grown-ups' dishes and food.

And when it was time for his highness to sleep, she could simply roll his little crib out thru the kitchen onto the back porch, instead of carrying the crib down and dashing back upstairs after the baby.

But, perhaps, you have no downstairs bedroom, since things so magically convenient usually happen only to other people. However, you can still deal with the problem satisfactorily. There is on the market a little portable ice box in which you can keep the milk and oranges and tomato juice for his own special diet. And there is also a little electric heater; in fact, there are a number of kinds of electric heaters, that you can use just as effectively and twice as conveniently as a kitchen stove. All these may be installed in such a room as you must use for a nursery, with a large economy in time and energy resulting.

But if the nursery is planned for the older child, it is a very different place. The white, hospital look blooms into a perfect garden of colors, little painted chairs and tables with stencil designs on them, bright chintz curtains, pillows, and rugs, and playthings galore.

Of course, it must be a very well lighted and ventilated room to keep the little ones healthy and free from eye strain. Suppose you fix a window seat beneath the windows, one that has a hinged top so the toys can be kept in it. On it you will want bright pillows, with, perhaps, little appliqued designs on them.

An attractive idea in curtains is a combination of unbleached muslin and blue chambray. They are made by cutting a

piece of unbleached muslin the length of your window and 18 inches wide. Cut squares of unbleached muslin, four of them, and two squares of chambray six by six. On the muslin squares put some Mother Goose characters, Humpty Dumpty, the cow jumping over the moon, and all the rest of the children's favorites. These may be cut from cretonne especially designed for a nursery or can be taken from transfer designs and cross-stitched or outlined in the squares. Now sew these squares to one end of each strip of muslin curtain and bind the inside edge of each curtain with a four-inch strip of chambray. Sew blue bias binding over each seam. Make a valance of blue chambray eight inches deep, and the curtain problem is complete.

For furniture there should be a table and chairs for tea parties, and a book case to hold the children's books. Don't make the mistake of putting in too much furniture, for the nursery will be plentifully "furnished" with kiddy cars and doll houses and rocking horses in no time at all.

Remember that the avoiding of sharp corners on the furniture is avoiding also of many a bad bump for the little Lords and Ladies of the nursery.

Toys should be chosen as a constructive education—to inspire creation instead of destruction, an appreciation of their worth and utility rather than a disregard for values—for toys are a great force in education.

Throughout the whole there should be a touch of happiness, accented by soft, pleasing colors, plenty of air and sunshine, and, above all else, clean floors and furnishings.



Make an indoor playroom for these children—don't let their exercise suffer from lack of play space.